



NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY  
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE  
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755

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Serial: T4014  
7 APR 1979

SUBJECT: Proposed Change in the Charter of the  
Computer Security Subcommittee

TO: Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
ATTN: Mr. Gambino (Chairman, Security Committee)  
Washington, DC 20505


1. In January of this year, I submitted a proposal (attached) to the members of the Computer Security Subcommittee and asked them for a formal (Agency) response by the February meeting. At the February meeting, it became clear that more time was required by the members, so the date for response was extended to 15 March, with the subject to be discussed more fully at the 22 March meeting.

STAT 2. At the 22 March meeting, there were still a number of agencies which had not fully responded (including NSA). The subcommittee spent about an hour and a half discussing my proposal without reaching any consensus, but there was a general view that they would like guidance from the Security Committee --

3. Fundamentally, a number of the members believe that any charter expansion (such as I propose) should only come on an initiative from SECOM, rather than from subcommittee action. Some other members are fairly neutral -- seeing no real need for a change in the subcommittee's charter.

4. My point of view (also supported by some other members) is that the present charter leaves the subcommittee with the job of setting policies for protecting intelligence information by computer security means when intelligence is present in some computers -- not in others. Specifically, computers used as telecommunication devices such as switches and buffers are excluded by the language in DCID 1/11.

NSA review completed

  
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5. This dichotomy between communications computers and other computers was much more realistic in the past than it is today. As increasing numbers of computers are linked together performing all kinds of functions, including both communication and routine general data processing service, the distinction is not very clear. I am concerned that we already have a "double standard" with the application of very strict rules to general purpose computers under DCID 1/16 and a different set of rules in AUTODIN I. I believe that it is essential that if intelligence information is to be adequately protected in the future, AUTODIN II and related computers must provide the same level of protection as other computers in the intelligence "system." Since communication computers may be used in a more restricted way, it does not necessarily mean that they must be protected in exactly the same way as general purpose systems such as SAFE, but the level of protection, or conversely -- the risk, should be about the same in both cases.

6. If a single group were to define the rules for all computer uses, it would almost certainly mean that "classes of use" or applications would need to be defined and then rules for each class would be developed with a goal of uniform protection across all classes. It would not be a simple task, but I believe that, in the long run, it should be done. It would almost certainly require some full time supporting staff, which could be attached to SECOM or to the subcommittee.

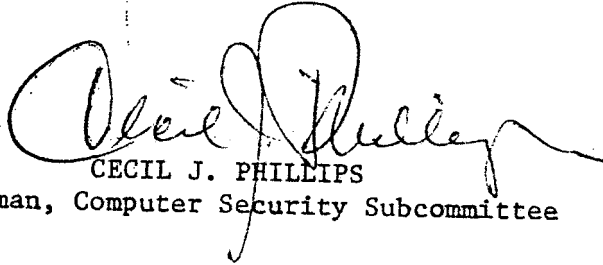
7. As I see it, the "status quo" alternative deals with only a part of the problem, viz., computer security for computers used in general purpose information processing of intelligence. This role corresponds closely to the overall role of the Information Handling Committee (INC), so there may be some need to explore further this relationship.

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8. To further cloud the picture, the COMSEC committee, which is about to be created as a successor to the COMSEC board, may feel that much of computer security is in its domain. I have had a long talk with 25X9  
 (of NSA) who has been drafting and staffing the new COMSEC committee charter. We did not come to a clear understanding of the boundary between COMSEC and computer security. The COMSEC committee's charter is still under review by legal experts, including NSA's General Counsel. I have mentioned the "boundary" problem to him and also sent him a note outlining my thoughts on the subject.

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9. In summary, I do not think there are easy answers to the topics I raise above, but I believe that they should be dealt with if we are to give any thing more than lip service to computer security. I will be glad to discuss this further with you at your convenience and I am willing to present the general problem -- as I see it -- to the SECOM if you wish.



CECIL J. PHILLIPS  
Chairman, Computer Security Subcommittee

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a/s

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